

STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON TOBACCO VARIETIES  
BEFORE SENATE AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE, MARCH 1, 1957

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE:

In the fall of 1955 I received complaints from South Carolina that certain varieties of tobacco were being downgraded for the purpose of government loan support prices. I immediately conferred with officials at the Department of Agriculture and received assurances that it was not contemplated that any change would be made in the policy of fixing price support levels on the basis of the grade of tobacco.

However, on December 18, 1956, the Department of Agriculture made an announcement outlawing two of the leading varieties of tobacco being planted in South Carolina.

Communications received from tobacco growers in my state indicate that this order will result in a serious reduction in their income, following the 20 percent reduction in tobacco acreage and the necessity for planting varieties with a much lower yield per acre than the varieties disapproved by the Department of Agriculture.

I understand the objective of the Department is an effort at reducing the tobacco surplus and also to bring about an increased supply of heavier bodied, more flavorful tobacco. However, I do not believe the Department should have attempted to attain this objective in this manner. Although the Department states that it cannot accurately grade the varieties of tobacco which it has outlawed, there are a number of tobacco experts, including those at Clemson Agricultural College in South Carolina, who disagree with the



Department. They hold the view that these varieties of tobacco can be graded accurately enough to serve the purposes of fixing price support levels.

Mr. Chairman, I believe a thorough investigation should be made as to the feasibility of amending the law relating to the grading of tobacco so as to remove discretionary authority now vested in the Secretary of Agriculture. However, I want to urge that it be taken into consideration that South Carolina tobacco growers have already planted their tobacco beds and if a change is made in the law the effective date should be fixed so as not to discriminate against South Carolina planters or the planters of any state.

I would like to ask that several communications which I have received on this subject along with a letter I wrote to the Secretary of Agriculture on January 14 be included in the record of this hearing, one of the communications being a statement from Dr. M. D. Farrar, Dean of Agriculture at Clemson. Dr. Farrar's statement points out that tests made by experts at Clemson proved the outlawed South Carolina varieties of tobacco to be superior to other varieties tested at Clemson College.

Mr. Chairman, while I am here I would also like to request and urge that your committee hold hearings on S. 10, a bill which Senator Johnston co-sponsored with me, and which is now pending in your sub-committee. S. 10 is a bill to amend the soil bank act so as to provide for participation by tobacco producers in the acreage reserve program on the basis of 1956 acreage allotments.

This bill would amend the soil bank act so as to provide:



(66-20)

"If the tobacco acreage allotment for any farm for any year is less than its 1956 allotment, such farm shall be deemed to have a tobacco base acreage for the purposes of this section for such year equal to its 1956 allotment (less any portion of the difference in such allotments which is attributable to factors other than reduction of the national marketing quota.)"

Mr. Chairman, I am convinced the enactment of this provision would help greatly to solve some of the problems of our tobacco farmers. I hope it will be possible for your committee to give it early consideration.

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